

THE RESEARCH PAPER PROCESS... **SIMPLIFIED!**

Technically speaking, there are only two things that make a research paper different from a standard essay: the parenthetical citations throughout the essay and the Works Cited listing at the end.

Stage 1: **Identify and record sources**

- * Assemble a working bibliography of potentially useful sources.
- * Haste makes waste! Record **all** bibliographic data now, not later.
- * Get the **format** right the first time. ‘Knightcite’ & ‘Easybib’ can help, but you need to check their results against your handbook’s guidelines.¹
- * DO NOT write the URL (e.g. www.website.com) in any citation or bib
- * Create an “about the author” annotation to rate the source’s credibility
- * Keep adding to the working bibliography as you locate new sources.

Stage 2: **Write notes**

- * Do not make a note card from a source until you’ve added it to your working bibliography
- * Record **author’s last name** and page # in the upper right corner (Jones 14)...
- * ... or for anonymous sources use the first **title word** & page # (“Title” 23)
- * Take notes that will help you answer the central question(s) of your research.
- * Maintain the 1:5:4 proportions.
 - 1 in 10 = direct quotations (i.e. do not over-quote)
 - 5 in 10 = paraphrase/summary
 - 4 in 10 = personal comment (a.k.a. “my note”)
- * Avoid plagiarism at all costs! See section 68 (pp. 383-406) for details
- * Beware “plagiphrasing” (see bottom of pg. 388)

Stage 3: **Organizing the notes**

- * Outline the steps required to answer the central question(s) of your research.
- * Like a deck of cards, arrange your note cards by “suit”—in this case, the equivalent of clubs or hearts will be the major steps or divisions in your outline.
- * Stack your piles of cards in order, and begin to write!

¹ See “Examples of MLA Works-Cited Entries” (tab ‘11’ in your handbook) for a list of different kinds of sources and how to format the works cited entry for each one.

Examples of Note Cards

1. A summary or paraphrase note conveys the data or information from the original but in totally different wording.

Turn to pg 451 to see how the student writer smoothly integrated this quote into her own paragraph.

(Simeon 2)

Today, over two-thirds of South Carolina's adults are obese or overweight.

[Observe that this is not a direct quotation. That means the meaning of the original is communicated but the wording is quite different.]

2. A direct quotation note can sometimes mix paraphrase with quotes, as seen here.

The parenthetical citation in the upper-right gives no page # because it's from a TED video.

(Christakis)

Christakis argues that obesity has become an epidemic sweeping across America, stating that "obesity can spread from person to person," and one's "friends' friends' friends" can cause the first connected person to gain weight.

3. An **anonymous** source is cited by using the first title word in title format (usually in quotation marks).

Some sources have a so-called "corporate author" (see pg. 431). Ask your professor or a librarian when in doubt about whether a source should be treated as anonymous or by a corporate author.

("Physical")

Physical activity is extremely important and helps with controlling weight, preventing illnesses, strengthening the body to help it function, and brightening attitudes.

[Notes that paraphrase or summarize present the data from the original source but convey it in the student's own wording. If the wording is too close to the original it's 'plagiarized' (see pg. 391-7).]

ENG 102 Research Paper (RP) Requirements

Due date: Turn in hard copy of the paper & all ancillary materials in its folder by 5:00 PM on Wednesday April 25th 2018).

Grace period: I will accept the RP up until 6:00 PM (no exceptions!) on Friday, 4/27/18. Use the drop-off box in front of my office door. Papers turned in during the grace period will receive a grade but no comments. Students may meet deadline by submitting the RP via email, but they must still turn in the **hard copy in its folder** with all required materials no later than the beginning of the final exam on Monday 4/30/18 (I do not grade papers submitted only in electronic format.)

Minimum length: 2,000 words (no maximum word limit), not including Works Cited

Format: Typed, double-spaced, **12-point font**. No cover page. Name, class & section #, “research paper,” and **word count** in the upper-right or upper-left corner of the first page. Use page numbering. Use standard margins (1” on right, left, top & bottom).

Use of sources: use MLA documentation style

- use parenthetical citations to indicate borrowed words, facts, ideas
- provide a works cited listing—the Works Cited is part of the paper but is not included in the word count

IMPORTANT: You may not use any Wikipedia article or any other source for which you cannot identify either specific author(s) or some other nameable entity (publisher, organization, governmental office, etc.) that specifies where the source originates from.

- direct quotations² must be properly formatted and are limited to 15% of total

Works Cited³ guidelines: 8 sources minimum of at least 5 different *types*⁴

Materials from the research process: Students are required, upon demand, to produce originals or copies of all source material they used to write the research paper. If I have a question about plagiarism, I will ask you to show me some or all of the printouts, photocopies, etc. you took your notes from. It is a college rule that all note cards, working bibs, and drafts be turned in to insure academic honesty. Keep all these materials—I will collect them at the final exam.

Audience: the whole class, including your teacher

Other Requirements: Include in a folder (w. pockets)...

*typed, double-spaced paper (name, etc. in upper corner—no cover page)

*writer’s memo (remind me of **your improvement goals from previous papers**)

optional: USB flash drive for voice comments

Grading the research paper: The following are some of the most important factors I consider when evaluating the term paper. Of course, all the rules of good collegiate writing learned in 101 & 102 apply as well.

² When quoting word-for-word, even for a part of a sentence, use either quotation marks or the indented block-quotation format (see your handbook for details). See the course syllabus for further comments on plagiarism. I will not accept ignorance as an excuse for plagiarism.

³ Recall the definition of *Cited* [as in the verb *to cite*!] Each of these works must be **used** (with the accompanying parenthetical citation) at least once within the body of your paper.

⁴ Types of sources: pp. tab 11 “EXAMPLES OF MLA WORKS-CITED” lists 10 different types of sources (i.e. “Books and Parts of Books,” “Government Publications,” etc.) **Books** may actually count as 2 different types, if you use different sorts of books: monographs, anthologies, and collections (such as collected letters or interviews) each count as a different type of source for the purposes of this requirement.

1) Correct use of MLA style research technique. The Works Cited page and the parenthetical citations must be correct, down to the last punctuation mark! I will check to see whether every work listed in the Works Cited was actually *used* in the paper.

2) Plagiarism. Check and double-check to make sure that you've used quotation marks (or indentation) to show where you use others' exact words, as specified in the course syllabus, *when using more than three (3) words in a row exactly as written by another writer*. Similarly, if you write a paraphrase or summary, take care that it is 100% in your own words! Give credit to your sources [via parenthetical citation] whenever you borrow by quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing.

Beware of "plagiphrasing," that is, trying to pass off as a paraphrase what is essentially a direct quotation with only very minor changes to it. See your handbook for examples of unacceptable paraphrases.

Why using quotation marks (or indentation for long 'block' quotations) **matters so much:** In reading a research paper if I come across a passage⁵ that was copied word-for-word from some other writer but those borrowed words are not set off with quotation marks (or indented format), *this calls into question every sentence in the student's paper*. In other words, whether the unattributed copying was accidental or deliberate doesn't matter, because now I, your reader, have a problem: How do I know that the rest of the paper isn't "stolen" too? Do I now have to get all the student's sources and check every single paragraph of the essay? I hope you can appreciate the position this puts your professor in and make every effort to give credit where credit is due at all times. **I would rather have a student violate the 15% direct quotation limit than commit plagiarism in an attempt to conceal the over-quoting!**

3) Transitions. When grading, I look for clear and smooth flow of thought and wording between cited material and your own input. Don't commit the 'drop & run' of plunking down a chunk of quotation or fact without providing transitions into and out of it.

4) Thoroughness. I'm impressed when writers are able to show how various sources overlap, agree, disagree, diverge, etc. The more questionable a certain point is, the greater the need to support in depth.

5) Balance and variety in source use. It's less impressive to me when a paper relies too much on just one or two sources.

6) Intelligent follow-up on the information cited. When you quote or paraphrase a source, your job isn't done. You are expected to interpret, evaluate, or otherwise comment on the cited facts. Why are they there? What are they supposed to mean?

7) Establishing the credibility/reliability of sources. You don't have to convince your readers that every source you used is solid and credible—just keep us informed about how much or how little confidence we ought to place in a particular source. If the source is top-notch, tell us so (and how you know it); if we should take the source's assertions with a grain of salt, say so (and explain why).

⁵ When I'm referring to a "passage" of text, this means any group of words—a short phrase, portions of a sentence, whole sentences, etc.—that is distinctive in its wording or style so that the wording shows the mind and style of the original writer. Use common sense about exceptions to the plagiarism rule. For example, some very ordinary, common, generic phrases probably don't have to be quoted so scrupulously... but **be careful!** It's always safest to fully give credit to the original writer.